

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TRIESTE 0035

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: INT, IT

SUBJ: VENICE AND THE VENETO

1. SUMMARY. CONTINUING THE CONSULATE'S ESTABLISHED PRACTICE OF MONTHLY VISITS TO VENICE (AND THROUGHTOUT THE CONSULAR DISTRICT), PRINCIPAL OFFICER VISITED THAT CITY FEBRUARY 2-4 CALLING ON ITALIAN AUTHORITIES, DC AND OTHER PARTY OFFICIALS, CARDINAL PATRIARCH, AND ACADEMIC/CULTURAL/MEDIA LEADERS. ALL WERE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT CONSULATE'S CONTINUING EMPHASIS ON VENICE AND NOTED SATISFACTION WITH AMCONSUL'S SUCCESS IN DEEPENING AND BROADENING RELATIONS WITH INSTITUTIONS THROUGHTOUT THE VENETO. ALMOST ALL EXPRESSED REGRET AT ABSENCE OF A PERMANENT U.S. PRESENCE IN VENICE BUT MOST AGREED THAT CONSUL'S MONTHLY TRIPS DO MUCH TO FILL THAT GAP. OUTCOME: VISITS ARE CLEARLY WELCOMED BY ITALIANS; CLOSER RELA-

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TIONSHIPS BETWEEN VENETIAN INSTITUTIONS AND CONSULATE AND USIS ARE SEEN AS DESIRABLE, HELPFUL, AND NECESSARY BY THOSE CONCERNED; AND SCHEDULED PERIODIC EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AT LOCAL LEVELS BETWEEN U.S. OFFICIALS AND THE DC AND ITS S UPPORTERS ARE PERCEIVED ON BOTH SIDES AS EESSENTIAL TO A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSUL'S MONTHLY VISITS TO VENICE HAVE BEEN WARMLY WELCOMED BY
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ALL CONCERNED AMONG VENETIAN OFFICIALS. WHILE A PERMANENT U.S. PRESENCE IS PRECEIVED BY MOST AS HIGHLY DESIRABLE, ALL AGREE THAT CONSUL'S REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS OF 2-3 DAYS' DURATION ARE THE NEXT BEST THING. PARTICULARLY ADAMANT ON THE SUBJECT OF THE U.S. PRESENCE WERE THE RESIDENT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES INCLU- DING THE NEW VENICE PREFECT, THE QUESTORE AND THE COMMANDERS OF VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS (GUARDIA DI FINANZA, CARABINIERI, PORT

COMMANDER). PERIODIC PARALLEL VISITS IN THE VENETO BY THE CONSUL HAVE ALSO SERVED TO CREATE A U. S. PRESENCE THROUGHOUT THE REGION. IN THIS CONNECTION, PRINCIPAL OFFICER HAS ESTABLISHED PARTICULARLY CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH VARIOUS MILITARY COMMANDS INCLUDING THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE CARABINIERI UNITS IN THE NORTHEAST ZONE. 3. VENETO REGIONAL PRESIDENT (DC) QUICKLY WARMED DURING CALL TO

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THE SUBJECT OF A U.S. PRESENCE IN THE VENETO. HE STRESSED IN PARTICULAR VENICE AND ITS FUTURE AND WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN WHAT ASSISTANCE THE US GOVERNMENT MIGHT PROVIDE IN THAT REGARD.

4. THE VENETO REMAINS ONE OF THE DC'S GREATEST STRONGHOLDS. IT SEEMS TO BE HEEDING PLUS POPULIS PLUS TO THE DEGREE THAT THERE IS SOME

PUBLIC AND VISIBLE COMMITMENT TO RENEWAL, REFORM AND NEW FACES. THE DC REGIONAL SECRETARY -- A CONVINCED FANFANIANO -- IS A STRONG LEADER AND SEEMS TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN PULLING THE VENETO DC BACK TOWARDS THE CENTER DESPITE RESISTANCE OF HIS LEFT-ORIENTED SECRETARIAT. MOST STRIKING, HOWEVER, IS THE CONFIDENCE OF DC LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS (REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL, COMMUNAL) ABOUT THE FUTURE. MOST SEEMED CONVINCED THAT THE PCI HAD REACHED ITS HIGH TIDE AT LEAST IN THE VENETO AND THAT THE DC WOULD DO WELL EVEN IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD NOW.

5. SOCIALISTS (PSI) AND COMMUNISTS (PCI) CONTINUE THEIR DUAL ALLIANCE IN GOVERNING THE VENICE CITY AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. THE PSI SEEMS TO BE WEARY OF THE ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY IT TAKES ALL THE BRICKBATS WHILE THE PCI REMAINS OUT OF HARM'S CONFIDENTIAL

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WAY AS THE ERSTWHILE JUNIOR PARTNER DESPITE ITS DOMINANT ROLE. VENICE MOYOR RIGO AS THE FRONT MAN FOR THE ALLIANCE IS UNDER

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OBVIOUS GREAT STRAIN AND FACES WITH QUITE DESPERATION THE MOUNTING MUNICIPAL DEBT AND THE PROSPECT THE PAYROLL WON'T BE MET. PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT STRUMENDO (PCI) IS CLEARLY UNDER FAR LESS PRESSURE AND SEEMS CONCERNED FOR THE MOST PART WITH ESTABLISHING IMAGE OF REASONABLENESS WHILE CONCENTRATING ON CULTURAL MATTERS.

6. PSI HELD PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES THROUGHOUT THE VENETO IN LAST FEW MONTHS AND THE NEW SECRETARIATS ARE DOMINATED BY MEMBERS ALLEGEDLY UNALIGNED TO ANY PARTY FACTION -- THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, ALTHOUGH THE RECENT DE MARTINO/MANCINI GAMBIT WAS REJECTED COLDLY IN THE VENETO. DEMORALIZED BY ITS SHOWING IN THE 1976 ELECTIONS, THE PSI (AT LEAST AS REFLECTED IN ITS VENETO AND FRIULI ORGANIZATIONS) SEEMS TO BELIEVE THAT ITS HOPES TO SURVIVE

AS A MAJOR ITALIAN POITICAL PARTY (AND A EUROPEAN FORCE) WILL
DEPEND LARGELY ON THE SUCCESS OF ITS PRESENT EFFORTS TO BECOME A
LEADER OF THE EUROPEAN LEFT IN THE FUTURE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT --
AN ASPIRATION WHICH AT BEST APPEARS ILLUSORY IN VIEW OF THE
REALITIES OF PCI STRENGHT IN ITALY AND ITS POSITION WITHIN
EUROPE.

7. CONVERSATION WITH CARDINAL PATRIARCH LUCIANI WAS CONFINED

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FOR MOST PART TO PLEASANTRIES AND GENERALITIES. THE
CARDINAL APPEARED SINGULARLY UNDISTURBED BY MOVES TOWARD RE-
VISION OF THE CONCORDAT WHICH HE SEEMED TO BELIEVE THE ITALIAN
CHURCH AND THE VATICAN WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT. HE
WELCOMED WHAT HE SAW AS THE DC'S FIRST HALTING STEPS TOWARDS
BECOMING A LAY PARTY AND HE CONSIDERED WITHIN THE CHURCH'S 2,000
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YEARS OF HISTORY. HIS GREATEST IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, HE SAID,
WERE THE COMMUNISTS WHO ATTENDED MASS REGULARLY.
8. AS FOR RELATIONS WITH THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, VENICE
UNIVERSITY RECTOR BENVENUTI MADE A PLEA FOR ASSISTANCE IN
ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES. HE
NOTED THAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS JUST EXPROPRIATED A BUILDING
NEAR CA' FOSCARI WHICH WOULD HOUSE THE UNIVERSITY'S ANGLO-
AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM. RECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN
STUDIES PROF. PEROSA ENVISAGED POSSIBLE COOPERATIVE ARRANGE-
MENT WITH USIS INVOLVING PADOVA-VENEZIA UNIVERSITIES AND
PERHAPS TRIESTE AS WELL -- THE THREE HAVING A COMBINED EN-
ROLLMENT OF ABOUT 90,000 STUDENTS. AS FOR THE CINI FOUNDA-
TION, IT HAS ITS OWN NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH VARIOUS

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BUT IT CLEARLY COULD BENEFIT AS
WELL FROM A MORE INSTITUTIONALIZED AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP
WITH USIS.
9. THE BIENNALE 1977 WILL INCLUDE A LOOK AT DISSENT IN
EASTERN EUROPE WITH EMPHASIS ON THE SOVIET UNION. BIENNALE
PRESIDENT CARLO RIPA DI MEAMA (PSI) IS ALREADY COMING UNDER
HEAVY ATTACK FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND IT IS UNCLEAR AT THIS
MOMENT HOW PCI WILL DEAL WITH THEIR COALITION PARTNER'S INITIATIVE.
10. COMMENT: MONTHLY VISITS BY CONSUL ARE CLEARLY WELCOME
AND ACTIVELY ENCOURAGED BY VENICE LEADERSHIP IN ALL CIRCLES.
BASIC GROUNDWORK HAS BEEN LAID AND ARRANGEMENTS MADE TO
LOOK AFTER CONSULAR NEEDS THOUGHOUT THE VENETO REGION.
CLOSE COOPERATION WITH CENTRAL AUTHORITIES AUGURS WELL FOR
THE TEMPESTOUS CONSULAR SEASON WHICH WILL SOON BE ON US.

POLITICALLY, THE VENETO, LIKE THE FRIULI, IS STILL DC
TERRITORY DESPITE SIGNIFICANT PCI INROADS. WHAT THE DC
DOES OR DOES NOT DO IN THESE TWO REGIONS WILL HAVE NATIONAL
IMPLICATIONS. AS FOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ACADEMIC/CULTURAL/
MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS, THERE IS CLEAR NEED FOR DEVELOPING CLOSE,
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TRIESTE 0035

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: INT, IT
SUBJ: VENICE AND THE VENETO

SITIES AND THE VENICE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE (TOTAL ENROLLMENT:
ABOUT 90,000 STUDENTS), THE CINI FOUNDATION THREE PRESTIGIOUS
REGIONAL DAILIES WITH A COMBINED CIRCULATION OF 220,000, AND
SUCH INTERNATIONALLY-KNOWN CULTURAL EVENTS AS THE BIENNALE.
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